



The trajectory of the political ideas of Alceu Amoroso Lima: of counterrevolution to catholic modernism (1928-1938)¹

A trajetória das ideias políticas de Alceu Amoroso Lima: da contrarrevolução ao modernismo católico (1928-1938)

La trayectoria de las ideas políticas de Alceu Amoroso Lima: de la contrarrevolución al modernismo católico (1928-1938)

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Abstract

This article is intended to analyse the trajectory of the political ideas of Alceu Amoroso Lima (1893-1983) during the period that begins with his conversion to catholicism in 1928 and extends up to his contact with the ideas of Jacques Maritain (1882-1973) ten years later, in 1938. It is generally agreed that during this period Alceu Amoroso Lima underwent a change in his political conceptions, in a process that runs parallel with a relevant transformation in his political ideas. Under the influence of the ideas of Jackson de Figueiredo (1891-1928), Amoroso Lima initially engaged himself in counterrevolutionary activism, assuming the status of a catholic intellectual. Later on, after his contact with the ideas of Maritain, he changed his political convictions and assumed the Christian Democracy as the political doctrine that inspired his engagement in catholicism.

Key words: Intellectuals. Catholic Modernism. Christian Democracy. Alceu Amoroso Lima.

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Resumo

Este artigo procura realizar uma análise da trajetória das ideias políticas de Alceu Amoroso Lima (1893-1983). O recorte temporal contempla o período de 1928 a 1938. Na investigação, parte-se do fenômeno de sua conversão ao catolicismo até o início do seu contato com as ideias de Jacques Maritain (1882-1973). Considera-se que nesse período Alceu Amoroso Lima começou uma mudança de posição política. Esse processo foi acompanhado de uma significativa transformação de suas ideias políticas. Assumindo a condição intelectual católico, Amoroso Lima engajou-se na militância contrarrevolucionária advinda da influência de Jackson de Figueiredo (1891-1928) sobre o seu pensamento. Mas, após o contato com as ideias de Maritain, mudou de posicionamento político, assumindo a democracia cristã como doutrina política para a sua militância no catolicismo.

Palavras-chave: Intelectuais. Modernismo Católico. Democracia Cristã. Alceu Amoroso Lima.

Resumen

Este artículo busca realizar un análisis de la trayectoria de las ideas políticas de Alceu Amoroso Lima (1893-1983). El recorte temporal contempla el período de 1928 a 1938. En la investigación, se parte del fenómeno de su conversión al catolicismo hasta el inicio de su contacto con las ideas de Jacques Maritain (1882-1973). Se considera que en ese período Alceu Amoroso Lima comenzó un cambio de posición política. Este proceso fue acompañado de una significativa transformación de sus ideas políticas. Asumiendo la condición intelectual católico, Amoroso Lima se comprometió en la militancia contrarrevolucionaria proveniente de la influencia de Jackson de Figueiredo (1891-1928) sobre su pensamiento. Pero después del contacto con las ideas de Maritain, cambió de posicionamiento político, asumiendo la democracia cristiana como doctrina política para su militancia en el catolicismo.

Palabras clave: Intelectuales. Modernismo católico. Democracia Cristiana. Alceu Amoroso Lima.

Introduction

The study of the trajectory and ideas of Alceu Amoroso Lima (1893-1983) has aroused the interest of researchers, especially in the fields of education and history. Evidences of this are the researches by Rodrigues (2006), Arduini (2015), Skalinski Junior (2014) and Carneiro Junior (2011), dedicated exclusively to Amoroso Lima's intellectual trajectory. With a voluminous work, ranging from literary criticism to essays on philosophy and economics, the legacy of the intellectual allows for many approaches. In the present work we analyze the political ideas of Amoroso Lima, from his conversion to Catholicism, in 1928, until the beginning of his interpretation and appropriation (CHARTIER, 1990 and 2002) of Jacques Maritain's thought (1882-1973), in the year of 1938.²

From a methodological point of view, the study will analyze the intellectual's trajectory and political ideas within a specific historical context. Thus, it will use the contributions of intellectual history, as presented by Vieira (2008), Silva (2002), Sirinelli (2010) and Dosse (2004 and 2009). In the analysis of the trajectory (LEVI, 1996 and 2000), (GINSBURG, 1987), (ELIAS, 1994), will turn to Bourdieu, in the text on “the biographical illusion”, published in the work “Practical reasons”, among other reflections (2013 and 2011) and also to Gramsci (2007), regarding the theme of Catholic Action. In the investigation of political ideas (RÉMOND, 2010), (KOSELLECK, 2006) a dialogue will be established with the historiography of education (SAVIANI, 2013) and (CURY, 1984 and 2001), in order to allow a better characterization of the historical context in which Amoroso Lima was inserted. The analysis of Amoroso Lima's trajectory was raised based on a doctoral research, in order to better understand the organization of Catholic intellectuality in Brazil, especially in the 1930s.

The historical sources that support the study are the following works by Amoroso Lima: *Adeus à Disponibilidade: carta a Sérgio Buarque de Holanda* (1928) [Farewell to Availability: letter to Sérgio Buarque from Netherlands (1928)]; *Tentativa de Itinerário* (1929) [Itinerary Attempt (1929)]; *Debates Pedagógicos* (1931) [Pedagogical Debates (1931)]; *Política* (1932) [Politics (1932)]; *Os Postulados Católicos ou Reivindicações Católicas* (1934) [Catholic Postulates or Catholic Claims (1934)]; *O Sentido da Nossa Vitória* (1934) [The Sense of Our Victory (1934)] and *Indicações Políticas: da Revolução à Constituição* (1936) [Political Indications: from the Revolution to the Constitution (1936)].³ Except for the letter to Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, the other productions are collections of articles and reflections disseminated by the intellectual through the press (magazines and newspapers) and in his conferences throughout Brazil.

The hypothesis that guides the work is that the process of converting Amoroso Lima to Catholicism marked a new position, in the sense indicated by Bourdieu (2013 and 2015), in his intellectual trajectory. This change in political and ideological position corresponded to the assimilation of hegemonic ideas in Brazilian Catholicism at the time. Thus, we chose to understand his political ideas at first linked to the counterrevolutionary Catholic ideology represented by Jackson de Figueiredo (1891-1928) and, later, linked to a change of integrists positions (ANTOINE, 1980) towards the Christian democracy of Jacques Maritain, represented by liberal Catholicism (AZZI, 1991) and (MARTINA, 2005).

² The beginning of Jacques Maritain's approach to integral humanism began, in fact, in 1936. However, in 1938, Catholics, led by Amoroso Lima, began to distance themselves from the Government of Getúlio Vargas.

³ The articles on integralism, published in 1934 and 1935, in the magazine A Ordem, were also reedited in this work, which will be used as a source for this study.

The Conversion and the beginning of Catholic militancy

This period of Amoroso Lima's trajectory is marked by the influence of Jackson de Figueiredo⁴, who had great importance in his process of conversion to Catholicism (SAVIANI, 2013, p.256). This conversion was preceded by an intense epistolary dialogue between the two characters, which began in 1919 and continued until 1928, being interrupted by the tragic death of Jackson de Figueiredo.

Before proceeding, it is appropriate to underline, in observance of Dosse's warning (2004, p.287) - for those in intellectual history, one must be careful in the use of certain "magic words", such as "influence and crisis" - that, in defending Jackson de Figueiredo's influence on the conversion of Alceu Amoroso Lima, we are not insisting on a mechanistic determinism. But we establish relations, as Bourdieu suggests, in the form of relational thinking, that is, the trajectory is inserted in a complex web of social and intellectual relations.

Regarding the formation of Amoroso Lima, Rodrigues (2013, p.66) presented some data that must be taken into account. Alceu Amoroso Lima was born in Rio de Janeiro on January 11, 1893 and died in Petrópolis on August 14, 1983. He was the son of Manuel José Amoroso Lima and Camila da Silva Amoroso Lima, a member of a wealthy family who had business in the textile industry. Between the years 1900 to 1912, Alceu Amoroso Lima traveled three times in Europe. The first trip was made when he was only seven years old. In 1909, he began his studies in legal sciences, completed in 1913. After completing his studies, he went to Paris, where he participated in a course with the French philosopher Henri Bergson. In 1917 he started working at Itamarati, an organ of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs chancellery. The following year, 1918, he married Maria Teresa de Faria, in Petrópolis. In 1919, Amoroso Lima created the pseudonym of Tristão de Athayde, which first appeared on June 17 in *O Jornal* [The Newspaper]. That same year, he began his epistolary dialogue with Jackson de Figueiredo. This information allows us to contextualize the process that will culminate in the conversion of Amoroso Lima to Catholicism.

Other aspects of Amoroso Lima's training path (1973a) deserve to be highlighted, such as his educational experiences with João Kopke (1852-1926), Fausto Barreto (1852-1908) and Silvio Romero (1851-1914). He stated: "I tend to place a very special emphasis on João Kopke, in childhood, and Silvio Romero in early youth" (p.37). According to his opinion, "both were much more than teachers to me" (p.37). In addition, Amoroso Lima was a student at the Ginásio Nacional, "today again Pedro II" (p.38). His experience at the former National Gymnasium, the traditional and aristocratic Colégio Pedro II, was remarkable. He described the rigorous entrance exam: "I had to prepare myself to enter the National Gymnasium" (p.39). The consideration of the educators he had and the school he attended allowed us to maintain that Amoroso Lima was a member of the Rio elite, this condition enabled him to access a privileged education.

Amoroso Lima was educated by private teachers and studied at renowned public educational institutions: the National Gymnasium (Colégio Pedro II) and the Faculty of Legal and Social Sciences of Rio de Janeiro. The educational legislation of the period was inspired by the Constitution of 1891, which defended the secularism of the Republic. According to Cury (2001), the separation between the Church and the State occurred through Decree 119-A of 07/01/1890. This legislative text had consequences in the first Constitution of the Republic, especially in its article 11, through which, "Brazil became legally and politically a secular country" (p.223). With

⁴ Jackson de Figueiredo's conversion took place in 1917, thanks to the mediation of Dom Sebastião Leme (1882-1942). After reading Dom Leme's 1916 Pastoral Letter, at the time still archbishop of Olinda and Recife, Figueiredo began to correspond with the prelate. This achievement was decisive for his conversion to Catholicism. His controversial and uncompromising personality set him apart from Alceu Amoroso Lima, who had a more sophisticated intellectual background and a conciliatory spirit. His thinking was characterized by traditionalism, heir to ultramontane Catholicism, was a great reader of the work of Joseph de Maistre (1753-1821).

the 1891 Magna Letter, freedom of worship was established in the country and Catholicism ceased to be the official state religion. The promulgation of the Constitution had practical consequences in the life of the Church, such as: “the end of the provision of State resources for the clergy (patronage regime); the ban on the vote of religious, monks, priests and other clergy; freedom of belief was assured; only civil marriage would be recognized by the State; and cemeteries would become secular in character” (p.224-225). But it was Article 72, paragraph 6, of the constitutional text that had the most consequences for the field of education: “The teaching given in public establishments will be a layman”. Rui Barbosa (1849-1923) played a fundamental role in the process of legal and political separation of Church and State. In the same way, it influenced the Constitution and the education developed in public institutions became lay. Higher education in the first republican decades was practically a state monopoly. Despite containing a vehement secularism, Amoroso Lima considered the 1891 Constitution, “the Church's freedom letter” (LIMA, 2001, p. 125). He pointed out advantages for the Church with the end of regalism, such as greater freedom for ecclesial activities. In fact, this is an important debate within the Church in the 19th century, the struggles, clashes and tensions between regalists and ultramontanists.

With the overthrow of the First Republic, there was a new arrangement of power after the Revolution of 1930 and also a rapprochement between the Church and the State. The intention of Catholic leaders was “to recrystallize society and the institution of the State”, for which they used education as a way of “re-socializing the ruling elites according to Christian principles”. It was a period marked by a “confrontation between the different pedagogical philosophies” (SALEM, 1982, p. 99), a confrontation that fostered an intense political and ideological debate between Catholic and liberal or secular thinkers (CUNHA, 2011) and (CURY, 1984).

For Scott Mainwaring (2004, p.47), the Church carried out a rapprochement with the State during the Old Republic, more precisely, in the governments of Epitácio Pessoa (1918-1922) and Arthur Bernardes (1922-1926),⁵ supported presidents by ecclesiastical leaders. But it was during the government of Getúlio Vargas that an “exceptional proximity” took place.

The milestone of the “Catholic rebirth” in Brazil “was formalized with the creation of *Revista A Ordem* (1921) [The order magazine] and *Centro Dom Vital* (1922) [Dom Vital center]” (SALEM, 1982, p. 101). Fostering the “cooptation of intellectuals” was at the heart wood of the ecclesial project captained by Cardinal Leme. This would be the strategy for “irradiation of the wide work of apostolate”. It must be borne in mind that the Church sought to “combat the agnostic and secular bases of the [republican] regime, disseminating Christian doctrine throughout society and its institutions”. It was an attempt to “regain Brazilian intelligence” for the Church. The Catholic university aimed at “recruitment and socialization of elites who, guided by Christian principles, would be trained to promote the moral unification of the country” (p. 103). In the view of Catholics, “the university - as a specialized locus for generation and socialization of the ruling layers - had to be Catholic” (p. 133). According to Salem, this movement of organization of the militant Catholic laity had the “triple leadership of Dom Leme, Alceu and Franca”, this in “in accordance with the designs of the Holy See” (p. 109). Rio de Janeiro was the nucleus of the renewal of Brazilian Catholicism represented in the ideals of neo-Christianity.

The Church's strategy focused on two fundamental points: the *masses* and the *elites*. Or, in other words, society and intellectuals. It was necessary to Christianize intellectuals, that's why the work of “conversion” should be done. Within this context, we can place the conversion of Alceu Amoroso Lima. As a religious event, but mainly as a new form of sociability and

⁵ Some details of this period deserve to be remembered, such as the violent clash between the candidacies of Nilo Peçanha and Arthur Bernardes, (candidate of the Catholics), in the elections of March 1, 1922; the imminence of the tenentist movement and the 1924 Revolution. As Francisco Iglésias points out, Jackson de Figueiredo occupied the “unfriendly role of censor of the press in the Bernardes government” (IGLÉSIAS, 1981, 138), which would be another testimony of his reactionaryism.

consecration (BOURDIEU, 2015) and (PEREIRA, 2012). Understanding religious rituals as forms of social stratification (DURKHEIM, 2009) and (WEBER, 2012).

Amoroso Lima (2003, p. 650) officially converted to Catholicism on August 15, 1928, when he was 33 years old, “when he received the Eucharist from Father Leonel Franca (1893-1948), in the church of Santo Inácio, in Rio - in what he called his 'second First Communion'”. An account of his conversion can be found in the text *Goodbye to Availability: letter to Sérgio Buarque de Holanda* (1928). That same year, months later, “with the death of Jackson de Figueiredo, which occurred on November 4, he assumed the presidency of the Dom Vital Center and the direction of A Ordem, the institution's magazine”. Guilherme Arduini (2015, p. 22) maintained that Figueiredo “was fighting an intellectual struggle to ‘reconvert’ Amoroso Lima”. It was, in fact, a *reconversion*, because, for the researcher: “Amoroso Lima had received catechesis during his childhood, but soon afterwards he abandoned the faith due to lack of interest”.

Amoroso Lima's conversion was the result of multiple efforts by important personalities of Catholicism in the 1920s, mainly Jackson de Figueiredo, priest Leonel Franca and Cardinal Dom Sebastião Leme, archbishop of Rio de Janeiro at the time. The characters who participated in the conversion process of Amoroso Lima, alongside him, would integrate in the following years what Saviani (2013, p. 265) called “catholic trinity”. In his interpretation of the history of Brazilian education in the 1930s, Saviani identifies two groups in contrast: on the one hand, a “governmental trinity”, formed by Getúlio Vargas, Francisco Campos and Gustavo Capanema and, on the other hand, a “Catholic trinity”, Formed by Cardinal Leme, Father Leonel Franca and Alceu Amoroso Lima. Both triads aimed directly at issues related to education. In this ideological and political clash in the educational field of the period, three main characters directly acted: Lourenço Filho, Fernando de Azevedo and Anísio Teixeira. In the words of Saviani (2013, p. 218), they formed the “cardinal trinity of the Escola Nova movement”.

Amoroso Lima (2001) considered the importance of lectures by Jesuit priest Leonel Franca, held in the years 1928 and 1929, at the Dom Vital Center, in Rio de Janeiro. Later, gathered in a publication entitled *Psicologia da Fé* (1934) [Psychology of Faith], the lectures revolved around the “*Psicologia da Conversão*”⁶ [psychology of conversion]. The conversion of intellectuals, free thinkers and letters was encouraged by the mentor of the Catholic laity group. Thus, it is possible to understand the process of adhesion of enlightened characters to Catholicism.

In the eyes of Amoroso Lima (2001, p. 116), Father Leonel Franca, S.J.'s lectures were mainly about three themes: “divorce”, “the psychology of faith” and “supernatural life”. The audience for the conferences was described in these terms: “Another initiative of the Centro Dom Vital, at that time, was the monthly conferences of Fr. Leonel Franca, S.J., in Santo Inácio. The big room was full, from a former president of the Republic, Epiácio Pessoa, to the recently converted poets, such as Murilo Mendes or this strange Rimbaud Brazilian, Ismael Nery”. He stressed that “his precarious health [of Father Franca] and the concern of the university [PUC-Rio], in the process of being founded, did not allow his frequent attendance at our Park 15.” Amoroso Lima also pointed out that the Dom Vital Center was intended for “intellectual apostolate”.

When referring to his own conversion, Alceu Amoroso Lima (1973a) declared: “the 1928 conversion was a conversion to God, the passage from dilettantism, from disengagement, to transcendent problems, that is, from the origins and ends of life and the human being” (p. 234). The leader of Catholic Action in Brazil belonged to the generation of a “precociously aged youth” and had some companions of the “premature wit to exist”, and all were, in his words, “as at the end of a road or in a dead end”. This generation was marked by “sybaritism” and “dilettantism”. Amoroso Lima named his generation as a “lost generation” or “at least wasted”. He claimed to have converted from “excessive wandering spirit” and “disenchantment with life” (LIMA,

⁶According to the preface by Father Leonel Franca (1934), “some aspects of the problem had already been dealt with in a series of conferences promoted in 1928 and 1929 by the Dom Vital Center”. The publication was dedicated “to all sincere souls, hungry for light and peace” (p.6).

1973b, p. 824). In the words of Father Leonel Franca (1934, p.298), conversion consisted of choosing “Christian joy” as a philosophy of life.

Counterrevolution and neo-Christianity

We need to point out Amoroso Lima's ties with the counterrevolutionary ideas represented by Jackson de Figueiredo. For Barros (1986), from the end of the 19th century, in Brazil, the so-called “Catholic-conservative mentality” emerged (p.25). This Catholic project aimed to combat *regalism* (the Church submitted to the emperor) and to defend *ultramontanism* (the Church submitted to the Pope). Still, it sought to reject liberalism, Protestantism and “catholize Brazil” (p.28). The most characteristic example of this clash between the different tendencies of Catholicism was the “Religious Question”, which took place from 1872 to 1875. During this period there was a great tension between the Catholic Church and Freemasonry. The militancy of the ultramontan bishops, among which Dom Antônio de Macedo Costa (1830-1891) and Dom Vital de Oliveira (1844-1875) stood out, was decisive to reform the Brazilian Catholicism of the time according to the directives emanating from Rome, under the pontificate of Pius IX. According to Barros (1986), it is during this period that the “Catholic-conservative reaction against liberal and scientific ideas” and the “organization of the Catholic laity, which is often more orthodox, more ultramontane than the clergy” will emerge. Among the laypersons, deputies “Leandro Bezerra and Tarquínio de Souza” and senators “Cândido Mendes de Almeida, Zacarias, Figueira de Mello, Rodrigues Silva, Francisco de Paula Silveira Lobo, etc.” stood out, all of whom were “paladins of the Syllabus (1864)” and supported the “ultramontane ideals” (p.33). In this way, there is an incidence of the “catholic-conservative” mentality on the trajectory of Alceu Amoroso Lima.

Villaça (2006) also understood that the “Catholic reaction” started, in fact, with the “Religious Question”, in 1873. He highlighted the importance of Tobias Barreto (1839-1889), of the “German influence on Brazilian culture” and the School from Recife, home of the spiritualist thought that was radicalized in Brazil, in the 1870-80s. The figure of Bishop Dom Vital de Oliveira “is the first anti-Pombal - Catholic - statement in Brazil's spiritual history” (p. 10). Catholic thought at that time was marked by “traditionalism or a certain reactionaryism”. Its most authorized representatives were Carlos de Laet (1847-1927) and Eduardo Prado (1860-1901). A certain “Catholic renewal” began to take shape with “the first three converts in our cultural history - Júlio Maria, in 1880, Nabuco, in 1892, and Felício dos Santos, in 1897”. But Júlio Maria was the most militant and open (“almost liberal”) character, notwithstanding the fact that he remained a “vigorous antipositivist and an apologist” (p.11). It was Júlio Maria (1850-1916) who stood out among writers and literary converts to Catholicism, for not being so fond of the monarchical order, such as Prado, Laet and Nabuco. At the end of the empire, he defended the separation between “the Altar and the Throne” (p.12). Thus, an organized and militant Catholic laity began to emerge in Brazil.

For Villaça (2006, p.12-13), Jackson de Figueiredo came to fill the gap left by Carlos de Laet among Catholic thinkers, in the context of the 20th century. Figueiredo's sociability contained some important names, such as: Tristão de Athayde (Alceu Amoroso Lima), Lourival Fontes, Sobral Pinto, Hamilton Nogueira, Durval de Moraes, Francisco Karam, Barreto Filho, Augusto Frederico Schmidt, Afonso Pena Júnior and Leonel Franca . The founder of Centro Dom Vital and “A Ordem” [The Order] magazine was a “controversial man” and a very controversial personality. He had a particular tendency “to reactionaryism, authoritarianism and antiliberalism”, despite his bohemian life, and was seen as “open, generous and understanding”. We can characterize Figueiredo's trajectory as a “writer, political journalist and pamphleteer”. He was a “reactionary public man” who used the “reactionary term with pleasure, with voluptuousness”. He became a paladin of reactionary thinking and the protagonist of the Catholic reaction. “Reactionary was, for Jackson, the anti-liberal.” The Catholic leader detested “liberal democracy, coming from Rousseau and the French Revolution” and “he loved order,

authority, stability”. He was opposed “to the quarters, to the tenentismo and the revolutionary spirit”. His political action was “the order's reaction against latent revolutionaryism”. To understand what was reactionary, just consider “the disciple of Joseph de Maistre, that is, the reactionary”. Jackson de Figueiredo was a passionate follower of Joseph de Maistre's political thought. Arduini (2015) maintained that “Figueiredo is the introducer of Maurras' ideas in Brazil” and, in turn, “Amoroso Lima is one of his interlocutors” (p.22).

Although Amoroso Lima (1973a) maintained that “from 1924 or 1925, moreover, after my meeting with Jackson de Figueiredo, my attitude towards life started to change” (p.95), we can ponder differences between two Catholic leaders. Amoroso Lima recognized himself in the “modernist generation, to which I belong” (p.85), represented by the Modern Art Week of 1922. On the other hand, after the 1928 conversion, there was a “rupture”. According to his words, “in 1928, there was a more difficult option and a tougher armor: that of Faith”, therefore, “I thought of repudiating Tristan” (p.96). On the differences with Figueiredo, he maintained: “while I defended liberal ideas, he was in an authoritarian position” and added: “Jackson, in addition to being authoritarian, was an anti-modernist” (p.118). It was the experience of 1928, when he took over the direction of Centro Dom Vital and the magazine A Ordem, which Amoroso Lima defined as the biggest landmark of Figueiredo's influence.

Jackson de Figueiredo, however, would come to exert a posthumous action on me. With his death his influence would be completed. Dead, I would end up winning myself at least for a while. This happened when I was invited to replace him in the direction of Centro Dom Vital. The feeling of responsibility, the tradition left by him, the presence of mutual friends excited me. *From there, I moved in another direction, moving from previous liberalism to an orthodoxly authoritarian position, based on the feeling of discipline and order. I was taken by the conviction that Catholicism was a right-wing position [...]. My articles on integralism date back to that time. He thought that integralism was a national political reaction, of a unitary and authoritarian character, against the weakness of the State, regionalism and the class struggle, in favor of the strong State, national unity and the corporate reform of the economy [...]. This was my position at the time, a position that was markedly right-wing, antiliberal, orthodoxy authoritarian* (LIMA, 1973a, p. 120-121, emphasis added).⁷

Scholars of Brazilian Catholicism, such as Mainwaring (2004), Azzi (1994), Matos (2011) and Lustosa (1991), are unanimous in referring to the time of Pius XI's pontificate as the period of neo-Christianity. The Church longed for a new alliance with the State and was therefore willing to contribute to politics, as long as Catholicism was recognized as a national good. Pius XI's papacy coincided with Mussolini's rise in Italy. In that period, the pope, who had lost his territories in that country, returned to be the sovereign of a state, the Vatican. In this way, he reunited himself with

⁷ Jackson de Figueiredo, no entanto, viria a exercer uma ação póstuma sobre mim. Com a morte dele completaria-se a sua influência. Morto, terminaria me vencendo ao menos por um tempo. Isto aconteceu quando fui convidado para substituí-lo na direção do Centro Dom Vital. O sentimento de responsabilidade, a tradição deixada por ele, a presença dos amigos comuns me empolgaram. *A partir daí caminhei numa outra direção, passando do liberalismo anterior para uma posição ortodoxamente autoritária, baseada no sentimento da disciplina e da ordem. Fui tomado pela convicção de que o catolicismo era uma posição de direita [...]. Meus artigos sobre o integralismo datam dessa época. Achava que o integralismo era uma reação política nacional, de caráter unitário e autoritário, contra a fraqueza do Estado, o regionalismo e a luta de classes, em favor do Estado forte, da unidade nacional e da reforma corporativa da economia [...]. Esta era minha posição à época, uma posição marcadamente de direita, antiliberal, ortodoxamente autoritária* (LIMA, 1973a, p. 120-121, grifo nosso).

spiritual power (religious leader) and temporal power (political leader and head of state). The ecclesial project of neo-Christianity in Brazil sought to employ the “effort to recreate a Christian state” (AZZI, 1994, p. 9). This would be the great ideal pursued by the Catholic elites animated by Dom Sebastião Leme from the 1920s, mainly after the National Eucharistic Congress of 1922 (DIAS, 1996). The containment of republican secularism and the re-creation of the Christian state are the goals of this period. The Christian State myth of that period had some “enemies”: the liberal, the Mason, the Communist, the Jew, the Protestant, the Spiritist, among others.

In the work *Politics* (1932), Amoroso Lima made extensive reference to the encyclical *Immortale Dei* (1885), by Leão XIII. The pope's teaching was about “the Christian constitution of states” and therefore laid the foundations for the neo-Christian mentality, that is, the Catholic effort to recreate the “Christian state”. As we know, such a project will be carried out in the pontificate of Pius XI. In the Catholic view (LIMA, 1956), the State should be based on “natural law: *the right of God*” (p. 74). According to Amoroso Lima, there was a need for a union of “temporal goods to spiritual goods, from civil values to religious values” and this “does not mean any *imperfection* on the part of civil society”. On the contrary, “the cooperation of the two powers, the civil and the religious” was the condition for a “perfect and complete” society (p.32). In the encyclical there was much praise for the monarchy and the ancient Catholic kingdoms of the Middle Ages. It is possible to establish a parallel between the pontificates of Leo XIII and Pius XI, mainly by comparing the social encyclicals of these popes: *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo anno* (1931). Both exhibit a conservative approach to the social issue, especially through the attempt to control the workers' movement through Catholic unionism, based on the social doctrine of the Church.

Amoroso Lima (1946) explained the *counterrevolutionary* character of Catholic Action (1935), that is, the *spiritual revolution* that Catholics wanted to undertake in the modern world. To this end, he criticized the ideas of Charles Maurras, leader of *Action Française*, who had already been condemned by Pius XI in 1926. Amoroso Lima (1956) acknowledged that he had “remote sympathies for Maurras in 1912 or 1913”, equally, “sympathies I had for fascism, in Italy or for integralism in Brazil” (p. 56). Despite criticisms of Maurras, added through the notes for the reissue of his book *Politics*, in 1948 and 1956, respectively, the French author was qualified as a “poet and humanist”, who forged the phrase “*politique d'abord*” (the politics first) (p.80), the basis of the political theory of *integral nationalism*. Such ideas had some adherents among Catholics, especially those who followed the guidance of the fundamentalists. Amoroso Lima (1936) judged Charles Maurras's “*politique d'abord*” as “wrong” and “false” (p.62). However, he preferred to correct it in the maxim “*Société d'abord*” and, later, “*catholique d'abord*” (p.63). Thus, the Catholic leader appropriated Maurras' ideas to defend the “Christian State”, in the form of the “*catholique d'abord*”, a political model of Catholic corporatism. In turn, Alceu Amoroso Lima (1946), later, considered this “moralistic” and “authoritarian” vision of the Church to be harmful, as he declared years later:

This is the counter-revolution to be undertaken. The Church is not just a ‘a temple of duties’ (Maurras): the Church is not just a lap to shelter our sufferings, or a barrier against social revolution or reborn pagan instincts. *The Church is the living Christ among us*. [...]. To those who want to regenerate the world through the Revolution, we oppose Regeneration of the world through Religion (LIMA, 1946, p. 31, emphasis added).⁸

⁸ Essa é a contrarrevolução a empreender. A Igreja não é apenas um ‘um templo de deveres’ (Maurras): a Igreja não é apenas um regaço para abrigar os nossos sofrimentos, ou uma barreira contra a revolução social ou os instintos pagãos renascidos. *A Igreja é o Cristo vivo entre nós*. [...]. Aos que querem regenerar o mundo pela Revolução, nós opomos a Regeneração do mundo pela Religião (LIMA, 1946, p. 31, grifo do autor).

Amoroso Lima maintained that Catholic Action called on the laity to “regenerate the world through religion”, in this case, Catholicism. It would be the Catholics' alternative to the Revolution. Or rather, a way of resolving the “social issue” of the modern world in the light of the Church's social doctrine. According to Azzi (2008, p. 255), Catholic Action in Brazil emerged as the Church's response to the creation of the National Liberating Alliance in 1935, whose feat was stimulated by the 1934 Constitution.⁹ Catholic Action faced the forces of the left and sought to guarantee the Catholic conquests obtained in the Constitution of 1934, as well as to create a force of resistance to the advance of communist ideas. There was an anti-communist panic among Catholics and the Church sought to place the Catholic laity at the service of the Vargas government in exchange for vigorous action against the Communists. The inspiration for Brazilian Catholic Action came from the Italian model promoted by Pius XI, which was centralized in the hands of clerical authority. The 1937 coup pleased the official Church, as it cooled the force of communism.

Gramsci's (2007) analysis, when investigating Catholic Action, had the merit of treating the issue as a complex issue. Its analysis is useful and necessary to show the struggle of forces and ideological tendencies that dispute the hegemony within the Church. For Gramsci, “integralist Catholics - Jesuits - modernists, represent the three 'organic' tendencies of Catholicism, that is, they are forces that dispute the hegemony in the Roman Church” (p. 157). Studies on Catholicism cannot incur the temptation of a simplistic analysis, which does not consider ideological disputes within the Church.

Pius XI intends to limit the importance of the fundamentalists, who are openly reactionary and who make it almost impossible to organize in France a powerful Catholic Action and a democratic-popular party that can compete with the radicals, but without attacking them head-on. The struggle against modernism had excessively unbalanced *Catholicism*; therefore, it is necessary to “centralize” it in the Jesuits, that is, to give it again a ductile political form, without doctrinal rigidities, with great freedom of maneuver, etc. ; Pius XI is really the pope of the Jesuits (GRAMSCI, 2007, p. 158, emphasis added).¹⁰

Carneiro (2010) stresses that, between 1922 to 1945, “conservative segments of the Catholic Church”, among others, were responsible for “production nuclei” of “extreme right” ideas in Brazil. These nuclei had “activists and sympathizers of Nazifascism” (p.433). According to the historian, “as of 1935, Getúlio Vargas did not hide his admiration for the figures and ideas of Hitler and Mussolini” and “the alliances with the Church guaranteed the State [from Vargas] a Catholic profile” (p.235). He maintained that the Estado Novo regime configured “a Brazilian fascism”, with “pacts signed with the leaders of the Catholic Church” (p.264). Integralism (CHASIN, 1999), (BERTONHA, 2004) was the most characteristic movement of Nazifascism in Brazil. Carone (1976) stated that “Father Hélder Câmara was part of the Advisory Council for Brazilian Integralist Action (AIB), alongside Belisário Pena, Alcebíades Delamare, Pedro Moura and San Thiago Dantas” (p.196). Despite Pius XI's

⁹ Carone (1989) considered that “the constituents end up promulgating on July 14, 1934 a conservative Constitution” (p.97).

¹⁰ Pio XI pretende limitar a importância dos integristas, abertamente reacionários e que tornam quase impossível a organização na França de uma poderosa Ação Católica e de um partido democrático-popular, que possa concorrer com os radicais, mas sem atacá-los de frente. A luta contra o modernismo desequilibrara excessivamente à direita o catolicismo; portanto, é preciso “centralizá-lo” nos jesuítas, isto é, dar-lhe de novo uma forma política dúctil, sem enrijecimentos doutrinários, com uma grande liberdade de manobra, etc.; Pio XI é realmente o papa dos jesuítas (GRAMSCI, 2007, p. 158, grifo nosso).

criticism of fascism,¹¹ through the encyclical *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* (1931), and disapprove of Nazism with the letter *Mit Brennender Sorge* (1937), it is possible to identify his defense of the doctrine of the corporate state, especially in the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (1931). Alcir Lenharo (1986, p. 162-163) found between the numbers 90 to 95 of the encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* ideas related to the dissemination of the doctrine of the corporate state. Arduini (2015, p. 112) went even further, in defending that in this encyclical: “Pius XI praises fascism as the system closest to what is desirable for the Church”. Schwartzman (2015) argued that the term “corporatism” was part of “for several decades the political proposals of authoritarian regimes, especially those of conservative Catholic inspiration” (p.109).

In his 1934 article, Tristão de Athayde, did not spare praise for the integralists, but rather claimed that the integralist movement was “perfectly compatible with the practice of the Church's social doctrine and Catholicism”. According to him,

Common enemies, common friends - this is enough to create a situation between Integralism and Catholics that can only be interpreted by **sincere understanding** [...]. I consider both participations [in integralism] to be perfectly compatible, not only with Catholic social doctrine, but also with the effective practice of Catholicism [...] I do not see in any of these points any fundamental difficulty that justifies fear of joining the integralist ranks, much less the attack on the movement [...]. I do not see, therefore, from a doctrinal point of view, any irremovable obstacle that prevents Catholics from entering Integralism (LIMA, 1936, p. 195, emphasis added).¹²

If the support for integralism of 1934, by Tristão de Athayde, can be considered “timid”, in 1935, his writings leave no doubt about his political position.

I have the most lively sympathy for the integralist movement, as I do for fascism and for all this modern reaction of the right side, which showed the non-inevitability of socialism. On the contrary, the possibility of reacting against the mistakes of the bourgeoisie, its capitalism and its democracy, without recourse to the violent Revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, the bloodiest and the most stupid that could be reached, to give to the working classes the just position they will have tomorrow in society, in reaction against the disguised slavery in which bourgeois Liberalism has been maintaining them. Therefore, my words do not give any sense of hostility to Integralism, but of justification to the primal requirement to which I referred above to all Catholics in the movement:

¹¹ We recall that fascism was condemned by Pope Pius XI through the encyclical “Non Abbiamo Bisogno” (On Catholic Action), written in Italian and published on 06/29/1931. Pius XI (2004, p.362), warned Catholics: “the fascist oath is not lawful”, in number 65 of the encyclical. Now, that the topic has received the attention of a pontifical document is an indication that some faithful were openly professing the fascist oath. This was not an irrelevant matter. The fascist oath consisted of the following: “I swear to follow the Duce's orders without discussion and defend with all my strength and, if necessary, with my blood the cause of the Fascist Revolution”.

¹² Inimigos comuns, amigos comuns – basta isso para criar entre o Integralismo e os católicos uma situação tal que só pode ser interpretada por uma **compreensão sincera** [...]. Considero ambas as participações [no integralismo] perfeitamente compatíveis, não só com a doutrina social católica, mas ainda com a prática efetiva do catolicismo [...] Não vejo em nenhum desses pontos nenhuma dificuldade fundamental que justifique o temor de ingressar nas fileiras integralistas e muito menos o ataque ao movimento. [...]. Não vejo, pois, do ponto de vista doutrinário, qualquer empecilho irremovível que impeça a entrada de católicos para o Integralismo (LIMA, 1936, p. 195, grifo do autor).

the preeminence of the Catholic conscience over the political conscience (LIMA, 1936, p. 209-210, emphasis added).¹³

In the book *Debates Pedagógicos* (1931) [Pedagogical Debates], the name of Francisco Campos (1891-1968), at the time minister of education of the provisional government, was widely quoted by Tristão de Athayde. The quotes were always friendly and had a certain expectation that the minister would be willing to meet the demands of the Church in the field of education. He maintained: “I trust in the high qualities of character, talent and illustration of the supervisor of our public education” and, also, “I know perfectly well the respect that you have for the voice of the Church and the sincere desire to serve the Brazilian Catholic conscience” (p.65). Athayde also praised his belonging to the “Legião Mineira” (p.16). For Carone (1989), fascism appeared in Brazil in 1922, “with the Legião do Cruzeiro do Sul”, but “eight years later other parties proliferate, such as Francisco Campos’s Legião de Outubro”, among others, that “preceded integralism” (p.101). According to Horta (2012, p.91) the Legião de Outubro was “created in Minas Gerais, in February 1931, by Francisco Campos (then Minister of Education), with the support of Gustavo Capanema (then Secretary of Interior and Justice of the State of Minas Gerais) and Amaro Lanari (finance secretary)”. The October Legion “was part of the strategy devised by Francisco Campos to strengthen its political support bases in Minas Gerais” and, in its project, “the involvement of the Church was included”. In addition, there is a commentary by Tristão de Athayde, in a more critical tone, to the ideas of Azevedo Amaral (1881-1942). For Gomes (2012, p. 78), Francisco Campos and Azevedo Amaral were “two intellectuals who stood out for their theoretical formulations and for the application of the models and principles they defended”, that is, they contributed to the formation of “authoritarian democracy”, consolidated during the Vargas era. This cast appears to be very clear evidence of Amoroso Lima’s approximation to authoritarian ideas.

Schwartzman (2015) considered that the Church had “a great religious influence on the Brazilian education established during the Vargas government” and that there was at that time “a pact between the Church and the State promoted by Francisco Campos” (p.193). Such an agreement mainly involved the attempt by Catholics to ideologically control education. Therefore, the Church’s link with an authoritarian dictatorship was characterized. In the understanding of Fausto (2011), “the dominant feature of the political system in force between 1930 and 1945 was the authoritarian, informal (Provisional Government), or formal (Estado Novo) dictatorship, cut only by the years 1934-1937, when Democratic freedoms were being suppressed, after the attempted coup of the PCB, in 1935” (p.23). The Catholic pact with Vargas had as a counterpart “the Church legitimizing the State” (LUSTOSA, 1991, p.54). In this way, Catholic leaders agreed to pay the price for the legitimation of an authoritarian state (FAUSTO, 2001) and (CHAUÍ, 2013).

For Carvalho (2013), the Estado Novo “was a regime closer to Portuguese Salazarism, which mixed repression with paternalism, without seeking to interfere in people’s private lives”. Carvalho also stresses: “it was an authoritarian regime, not totalitarian in the style of fascism, Nazism, or communism” (p. 109). The Estado Novo was not fascist, however, it was authoritarian, even taking advantage of the repression against its opponents. Miceli (2012) showed the importance of remembering “the Capanema-Alceu partnership” in the field of education, arising from the pact celebrated between “the new Vargas regime and the Catholic Church”, made possible “by his mentor Francisco Campos, with arrangement by Alceu Amoroso Lima” (p.383).

¹³ *Tenho pelo movimento integralista a mais viva simpatia, como tenho pelo fascismo e por toda essa moderna reação das direitas, que mostraram a não inevitabilidade do socialismo. E, ao contrario, a possibilidade de reagir contra os erros da burguesia, do seu capitalismo e da sua democracia, sem o recurso à Revolução violenta e à ditadura do proletariado, a mais sangrenta e a mais estúpida a que se poderia chegar, para dar às classes operárias a posição justa que amanhã vão ter na sociedade, em reação contra a disfarçada escravidão em que o Liberalismo burguês as vem mantendo. Não se dê, pois, às minhas palavras nenhum sentido de hostilidade ao Integralismo, e sim de justificação á exigência primacial a que acima me referi para todos os católicos no movimento: a preeminência da consciência católica sobre a consciência política (LIMA, 1936, p. 209-210, grifo nosso).*

According to Costa (2015), Amoroso Lima supported the “conservative wing” (p.209), mainly by engaging in Catholic militancy at Centro Dom Vital, as a continuator of Jackson de Figueiredo's legacy. Despite this, he acknowledged that the Catholic leader belonged to a group of “modernizing academics” (p.211). When commenting on the ideas of Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, he made clear the accusation of this intellectual about Amoroso Lima: “importing the (conservative) ideas of Action Française, by Jacques Maritain, Julien Benda and T.S.Eliot” (p.212).

Catholic historians often divide Catholic Action into two matrixes: the Italian and the Belgian.¹⁴ The Italian has a strong conservative nature, and promoted a kind of Catholic propaganda that intended to spread Catholicism through the media, radio, cinema, newspaper and various publications of the time. In line with the proposal to restore Catholicism through the recovery of its hegemony in the control of social life, the Italian side of Catholic Action approached that type of regime that Eric Hobsbawm called “clerical-fascist”.¹⁵ This aspect sought to reinvigorate the order of Christianity in society through the collaboration of the Church with the State. The French or Belgian aspect, which was also analyzed by Gramsci (2007, p. 160), proved to be closer to what Eric Hobsbawm (2011, p. 119) called “social Catholics”, linked to Christian Democracy. In this complex ecclesial and social movement, with conservative and modernizing features, Amoroso Lima's trajectory was situated.

From Integrism to Christian Democracy

Miceli (2012) observed that Centro Dom Vital and Revista *A Ordem* [The Order] were spheres of activity of the Church in the intellectual field and, later, in society at the time. These Church initiatives aimed at the “institutional and ideological framework of the intellectuals” (p.127-128). And, also, they promoted the formation of a “*Catholic intelligentsia*” (p.162). These spaces for intellectual sociability promoted the spread of doctrines and positions on temporal issues of interest to Catholics. In addition to Jackson de Figueiredo, other names should be highlighted in the Catholic laity of the time, such as: “Hamilton Nogueira, Jônatas Serrano, Perillo Gomes, Heráclito Sobral Pinto and Everardo Backheuser” (ARDUINI, 2015, p. 23).

Campos (1968) understood that neotomism was the primordial philosophy of Catholic intellectuals linked to the Centro Dom Vital and the magazine *A Ordem* [The Order]. However, neotomism would only be consolidated as the official philosophy of the vitalists during the period of Alceu Amoroso Lima's leadership. Jackson de Figueiredo “was a disciple of Farias Brito (1862-1917), from whom he inherited interests in philosophical problems and the spiritualist tendency” (p. 81) and, according to his ideas, “the Jacksonian movement represents, as a historical movement, an awareness of the spiritual strength of Catholicism, of an anti-positivist, anti-materialist and anti-liberal nature. Jackson de Figueiredo had a somewhat ultramontane and reactionary spirit” (p. 82). When analyzing Neotomism in the state of Rio de Janeiro, Fernando Arruda Campos, showed the importance of Alceu Amoroso Lima when he affirmed that “the political doctrine, which Alceu Amoroso Lima defends, in this way, as a *Christian humanism* that, aiming to avoid the excesses of liberalism and socialism, seeks to maintain a balance between extremes” (p. 211). Jackson de Figueiredo's legacy at Centro Dom Vital was anti-intellectualist and of reactionary politics. This scenario changed when Alceu took over the direction of the Center and the magazine, with Jackson's death in 1928. It was in Jacques Maritain's “Thomism” that a metaphysical basis was found for the expression of Catholic thought” (p. 214).

The note, added by Amoroso Lima in the book *Politics*, in 1948, clearly shows his change in political position. The term *Christian integralism* has disappeared and has been passed over in favor of expressions such as *humanism and Christian democracy*. He argued: “We can no longer

¹⁴ For Riolando Azzi (2001, p. 30), in Italy, Catholic Action had the leadership and “sponsorship of Pius XI” and in Belgium, it received “the encouragement of Father Joseph Cardijn”.

¹⁵ He was present in a more radical way in Plínio Salgado's integralism project.

keep the term in the original, changing it to Christian democracy, universalism or political humanism [...] political conception that we believe to be true” (LIMA, 1956, p. 130). During this period, Amoroso Lima became politically engaged and became “co-founder of the Christian Democratic Movement in Latin America (Montevideo, 1947)” (LIMA, 1984, p.87).

For Maritain (1966), *integral humanism* was a response to the crisis of civilization in the 20th century. This crisis was reflected in the pessimistic view of modernity, “with its mental perversion and its education for death” and, therefore, there was a need for “renewing inspiration in the sphere of democratic nations” (p. 142). His intention was to promote the articulation between “integral humanism and liberal education”, through which Maritain sought to develop a “personalist and community civilization founded on human rights and satisfying the social needs of man” (p. 143). He understood that “tomorrow's education must also end the separation between religious inspiration and secular activity of man, since integral humanism must present, as one of its main characteristics, an effort to sanctify secular and temporal existence” (p. 144). Pius XI charged the philosopher Jacques Maritain to define the Church's social policy in the face of the modern world.

Thus, one can understand two phases in Maritain's thought: the *metaphysical* and the *social*. According to Amoroso Lima, it was from the work *Integral Humanism* (1936) that Maritain began to develop a kind of social Thomism, helping to renew the social thinking of the Church. This movement characterized what Azzi (1994, p. 129), called “the maritainists and liberal Catholicism”. Such a group lived in constant tension with “authoritarian” Catholics. We see the emergence of liberal Catholicism towards Christian democracy and the opening “towards the social”.

The understanding of Alceu Amoroso Lima's trajectory expands when one considers the words of Tristão de Athayde (1969): “I have tried to be: *Catholic* in religion, *Thomist* in philosophy, *democrat* in politics and *modernist* in art. Nor *anti-modernist* because Catholic like Jackson; nor *anti-Catholic* because modernist, like Mário de Andrade. On the contrary, *Catholic* and *modern in art*” (p. 47-48, emphasis added).

Final considerations

Alceu Amoroso Lima's trajectory and political ideas from 1928 to 1938 indicate a new position, based on his conversion to Catholicism. As Amoroso Lima would qualify years later, it was a *reactionary experience*. From a modernist, before his conversion, he became an activist of integrating Catholicism, albeit for a short period. He felt obliged to continue Jackson de Figueiredo's legacy, who had been an enthusiast of authoritarian, anti-communist and anti-liberal thinking. However, from 1936, the intellectual found in Jacques Maritain's philosophy a way of reconciling *Catholicism*, *humanism* and *democracy*.

The process of changing integralist positions towards Christian democracy was slow and contradictory. This supposes analyzing the way Amoroso Lima read, interpreted and appropriated the ideas of Charles Maurras and Jacques Maritain. However, this is a task to be carried out by further research.

Amoroso Lima found in Maritain's Christian humanism a possibility of renewal for the Brazilian Catholicism of the period. As a result, he moved away from the authoritarian positions shared in the breast of the Catholic laity of the time. The year 1936 marked the beginning of the appropriation and interpretation of Maritain's thinking among the Brazilian Catholic laity. This process was led by Amoroso Lima and led part of the Catholic group to distance itself from authoritarian and anti-democratic positions.

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